



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Language Access Statement

December 7, 2023

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is committed to strengthening its services and programs by ensuring that individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) receive meaningful access to USDA's federally conducted and federally assisted programs and activities. On November 9, 2023, USDA's Language Access Plan became effective; it is available at <https://usda.gov/oascr/languageaccess>. This statement provides an overview of the USDA Language Access Plan.

Timely and accurate communication with the public is essential to USDA's mission to serve all people in the United States by providing effective, innovative, science-based policy leadership in agriculture, food and nutrition, natural resource protection and management, rural development, and related issues with a commitment to delivering equitable and climate-smart opportunities that inspire and help America thrive.

It is USDA's policy that Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices, and staff must take reasonable steps to plan for and provide individuals with LEP timely, accurate, and effective communications within all programs or activities conducted by the Department—and must work to ensure that providers of USDA-assisted programs comply with their corresponding language access obligations and with USDA policies. These policies are based on the principle that it is USDA's responsibility, and not that of an individual seeking services, to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to all USDA programs and activities and foster equity for individuals who interact, or may interact, with USDA over the phone, in writing, in person, or via electronic methods.

Providers of USDA-assisted programs and activities must also take reasonable steps to provide individuals with LEP timely, accurate, and effective communication.

USDA staff shall take reasonable steps to effectively inform the public, in a language members of the public understand, of the availability of language assistance services, and to provide qualified language assistance at no cost to individuals with LEP. Among the steps that shall be taken to meet this requirement, USDA has established a Language Access webpage (<https://www.usda.gov/oascr/languageaccess>), which posts appropriate information and documentation, including the USDA Language Access Plan as well as mission area, agency, and staff office language access plans, along with other applicable authorities and resources and contact information of individuals responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and providing oversight with regard to language access for members of the public who may seek information or language access services.

USDA's Language Access Plan is intended to improve the internal management of the Department's language access program, and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers or employees, or any person. USDA's Language Access Plan is intended for the internal management of the Department's language access program, and is not intended to be cited in any judicial or administrative proceeding. Administration of the programs discussed is within the sole discretion of the Department and its agencies and offices.

For more information, see <https://usda.gov/oascr/languageaccess>. (This document is posted in multiple languages there.)